



2022 JURGEN BANNED ART COMICS CONTEST
CREATOR: Katy Hooper

TITLE: untitled

Panel 1: text box: I'm in Cabell Library, trying to make a comic for the Jurgen Comics Contest about censorship and the role of art in society.

Panel 2: text box: I've been doing a bunch of reading but I don't feel any closer to having an idea that contains some valuable insight.

(Devil doodle) Speech bubble: try reading over your notes a fifth time, that'll definitely help. moron lol

Panel 3/4: text is jumbled around the pages of a notebook.

Jurgen: A Comedy of Justice was published in 1919 by James Branch Cabell. It's an imaginative fantasy novel that dabbles in religious themes and Arthurian legends, but it's also a satire that pokes fun at contemporary America.

Shortly after it was published, the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice seized the plates and tried to charge the publisher for "obscenity," primarily referring to double-entendres in the text, although those were by no means the only problem they had with it.

After more than 2 years, the Jurgen publishers were acquitted. The trial raised many concerns about whether the NYSSV, which was not a government agency, should be able to censor art -- and by what metrics art should be judged.

"None the less I do still believe that Jurgen is, as originally labeled, "a book wherein each man will find what his nature enables him to see"..." - James Branch Cabell

kind of funny that the book is called "a comedy of justice" & then this farce happens

speech bubble coming from devil doodle: i'm the devil and i'm in the book

obviously censorship and the role of art in society are things that are still relevant today. the moral standards by which we judge things are different but nobody's actually solved or answered any of these questions.

in fact, people can't even agree on what censorship *is* or what counts.

there are more questions here than answers. here are a few on my mind:

- who do our rules protect? who has the authority to enforce them? what does "enforcing" look like?
- who has the power to make sure they are heard? who doesn't?
- what is art? what is obscenity? is art itself worth protecting?

i'm struggling to turn this series of events into a parable that we can learn from, but maybe the point is that i don't have to. not every story has to teach us a clear moral.

Panel 5: speech bubble: Is it enough to just resonate with people and have them draw their own conclusions?

Panel 6: speech bubble: Maybe, but you're supposed to be *saying* something in this comic.

speech bubble: I think I am.

Panel 7: (Devil doodle) speech bubble: Anyway, isn't this all a little too meta?

speech bubble: Jurgen has that whole added section where Cabell makes fun of the trial he was just in, and made a thinly veiled stand-in for the Secretary of the NY Society for the Suppression of Vice a "malodorous" bug. It's totally in line with the source material.